A PARIS MYSTERY

By the Author of "My Deeds and My Daughter"

[Continued from Sunday, November 28th.]

Jules Pernet, the tenant occupying the room adjoining that of Meissner, interrogated, gave evidence: That on Monday night, while engaged on his work as a copyist of manuscript, he had heard a dull sound, such as might be caused by a falling body of some weight, apparently coming from Meissner's room. He had thought that his neighbor must have let fall on the floor a large and heavy book, or overturned some article of furniture. Thereafter had heard a noise of footsteps in the room, and had remarked it as something unusual, his neighbor being always very quiet. Could not say precisely at what time he had heard the sound of the falling body, but thought it must have been about ten. The noise in Meissner's room had attracted his notice because it was unusual; the tolling of the bells at ten o'clock, though much louder, had been quite unmarked by him; he was accustomed to it, and, busy over his mechanical work as copyist, paid no attention to it. Pressed to give a conjecturnl answer, refused, repeating that he was quite unable to say whether the sound had been heard by him before or after the striking of ten o'clock.

The janitor, Mouton, recalled and re-examined, stated that the keys of the tenants hung on a rack in his room, with the candlestick of each above. The candles were brought down from the upper rooms each morning; there being no light in the staircase, the tenants were accustomed to light them in his room before going upstairs at night. During winter one candle would serve Meissner for two nights; the one he took upstairs with him on the night of Monday had lasted three. He, Mouton, had remarked on this in handing the candle to Meissner, making a joke about it. There was enough left of the candle, he thought, to burn for perhaps an hour and a half—not more. Had been shown the long dagger found beside the corpse; had never seen any such weapon in the possession of the deceased.

Auguste Kosinski, restaurant keeper, Rue de Vaugirard, stated that he was proprietor of the restaurant at which the deceased Joseph Meissner regularly dined. His hour of arrival was at 6:15, and he invariably left at 7:15. On the evening of Monday he had left the restaurant at his usual hour.

Samuel Koch, waiter at the Cafe Voltaire, stated that the deceased Joseph Meissner came to that cafe every evening at about 7:30, and sat for above an hour over a cup of coffee, reading the financial journals. On the evening of Monday Meissner had left the cafe at about 8:45, his usual hour.

Note by the judge of instruction: The janitor, Mouton, may now be released from surveillance, there being nothing to connect him in any way with the crime.

CHAPTER VI.

My encounter with the three men in the Rue Dauphine.

After my encounter with the three men in the Rue Dauphine, I rushed on aimlessly through the snow, down one street, along another, not caring whither I went. I was for the time incapable of thinking connectedly. No friendship could have been closer than that between Raoul and myself. Since our first meeting, four years ago, we had literally lived our life in common. He was in most things my superior, but he himself did not think so. Our confidence in one another had been perfect; I thought I knew him to the bottom of his soul. Now that I was forced to believe him a criminal, a murderer—can you wonder that it should have seemed to me almost as if the world had suddenly come to an end—as if a great, black gulf had yawned open at my feet, and all the joy and beauty of life lay now and forever behind me?

Again the thought came to me, had I done my duty to my friend? was I doing it now? Raoul was guilty; it seemed impossible to doubt it. But still, he was my friend. He had killed this man, but did I know the provocation he might have received? What had I intended in placing the money and the warning paragraph on the table, that he might see them when he awoke? It had been a way of saying, "Fly, escape, hide yourself while there is time; I cannot bring myself to look you in the face, but this much I have done for you." But was that enough? Should not I have gone to him and spoken and urged him to fly? Should I not have helped him out of his danger? Might not the warning I had given be in vain? Might it not have come too late? Great heaven, it had been too late! That man who had stopped me as I fled from the house—I had not realized the truth at the time, nor till now—that man was an agent of police now that I thought of it, he had said so. Already Raoul was arrested, and through my fault! I despised myself; I execrated my cowardice; I felt like the murderer of my friend. At once, without a moment's hesitation, I turned on my steps and hastened back to the Rue Dauphine.

"Here is the key of Monsieur!" cried Pierre after me, as I hurried past his door. "M. Girard has gone out."

"Gone out!" I repeated, mechanically.

"Yes, with a gentleman who called for him—a stout gentleman, a friend of M. Girard's, he said. He was upstairs with M. Girard for some time; then they went out together, not ten minutes ago."

I did not need to hear more. Sad at heart I went upstairs and entered our garret-room. On the table stood the dinner from Magny's, the two bottles of wine untouched. Beside the tray, just where I had placed them, lay the evening newspaper and the little pile of money. The drawers of the bureau I noticed were half pulled out. I looked into them. My papers had been left; Raoul's were all taken away.

The fire had gone out, but I did not think of rekindling it. I did not want comforts which Raoul could not share. For long I sat at the table, a prey to my wretched thoughts, until the sudden leaping up of the expiring candle warned me of the lapse of time. My snow-drenched clothes made me shiver in every limb; I hastily undressed and threw myself into bed. There, from sheer fatigue of mind and body, I must have slept; since I remember no more until the servant awoke me next morning.

Pierre greeted me as usual: the news of Raoul's arrest was, therefore, not yet published. I sent him, however, for a newspaper, that I might learn the latest developments of the case.

The Figaro had a long paragraph, headed as usual, "The Crime of Christmas-day." It stated that no arrest had yet been made, but that the police were understood to have found a clew and to be now on the track of the assassin. It commented on the mysterious character of the crime. "One of the chief difficulties of the case," said the writer, "is the apparent want of motive in the proceedings of the unknown murderer. No doubt the deceased Joseph Meissner had a dangerous reputation for wealth; possibly, from the nature of his business, he may have had enemies. But if plunder was the motive for the deed, why did the assassin, who seems to have been quite unhurried, leave behind him valuables like those mentioned in the police inventory—money, trinkets and jewels, which could have been so easily carried away? On the other hand, if revenge and not robbery was the motive, why should the assassin ransack those lock-fast places, breaking into some, opening others—overturning everything; and apparently taking nothing? A theory to explain this contradiction has yet to be found."

Here was a point. I tried to think it out calmly in connection with Raoul and his relations, so far as I knew them, to the murdered man. But all my pondering was in vain; I could find no theory. Only the stern facts confronted me.

The paragraph in The Figaro next went on to describe the articles exhibited at the Morgue, which, it seemed, were still attracting public curiosity. "These," it said, "are the real clew to the discovery of the criminal. The police have to lay their hands upon the individual who, on Monday night, dropped from his wrist that ivory button in the room of Joseph Meissner. They have to find, if possible, the other ivory button that makes the pair. In brief, they have to find the man G——, the owner of the dagger with which the crime was committed."

My hand so shook at I read this terrible paragraph that I could scarcely hold the paper. It was I who had been the first to find that single ivory button at Raoul's sleeve—and I had left it there!—I, his friend! I had had it in my power to destroy the evidence against him, and instead I had preserved it. Let him be guilty or not, it was not my part to deliver him up to justice; yet that was what I had done. I forced myself to read on.

"The dagger now being shown at the Morgue," continued the writer, "is of so singular a kind that no one who has once seen it could fail to identify it. It is of Japanese manufacture, the steel being specially fine, and the lacquering of the hilt being very rich and artistic. On one side of the blade is an inscription in the Japanese character; on the other side is the figure of a flower, with a single word beside it, also in the Japanese character. This word is stated, by a well-known Orientalist who has seen the weapon, to mean Illusion, and to have a religious significance. M. de St. Florent, the well-known private collector, writes us that the dagger of the Passage de Mazarin is not unique, as has been stated in several of the journals. M. de St. Florent possesses a weapon which is an exact counterpart of the one found beside the corpse of Joseph Meissner." The paragraph ended with the statement that next day the funeral of the murdered man was to take place from the Morgue.

I did not leave the house all that day; I shrank from doing so. If I went out, and if the news of Raoul's arrest were now generally known, as was possible, I should be assailed with questions from the numerous friends of both of us—questions which to me would be torture. I could do nothing, at least, I thought and thought, I read the newspaper reports over and over again, and could devise no measure which would be of any advantage to my unhappy friend. Indeed, the best service I could render him—so far as it seemed just then—was to keep out of the way. In trying to imagine a possible examination, I became aware that my evidence would not be in his favor.

This was by far the most wretched day I ever spent in my life. This forced inaction, the cruel anxiety about my friend, the remorse of my own conduct—which I painted, no doubt, in colors unduly dark—all these contributed to my misery. I lunched on what remained eatable of Magny's dinner—the dinner that had been ordered to celebrate the accepting of the comedy—and drank a bottle of wine. The day wore on with maddening tardiness; at length evening came, and again I sent out Pierre for a journal. By this time, surely, the news of the arrest must have been made public. A glance at the paper showed me that it had.

The paragraph was headed, "Crime of Christmas day: Arrest of the Assassin," and ran thus:

"An arrest has now been made in the case of the Passage de Mazarin, and all the circumstances point to the conclusion that the police have laid their hands on the veritable murderer. The individual arrested on suspicion is a young man named Raoul Girard, student of law, residing at No. 28 Rue Dauphine, a nephew of the murdered man. Further information is at present withheld by the police. It may be stated, however, that the arrest was made at a late hour last night, and that the credit of it is entirely due to the Agent of Police Py. There is reason to believe that, but for the activity shown by this skillful and energetic officer, Girard, who was in hiding, would ere this have succeeded in effecting his escape."

I was reading this paragraph with feelings that may be imagined, when I was startled by a knocking at the door. I say "startled," because I was apprehensive at every moment of a visit from the agents of police. This time, however, it was only Pierre.

"A lady desires to see Monsieur," he said, and ushered in Madame Duvaine, the mother of Gabrielle.

One glance at her face showed me that she knew all.

"M. Marsal," she said, "come with me at once! For pity's sake don't refuse! I said that I would bring you—that I would not come back without you. I beg—I implore of you to come!"

"But where?"—I had a confused notion that she wished me to go with her to Raoul—"to the house of detention?"

"No, no! It is Gabrielle who sent me to bring you. 'Go to M. Marsal,' she said, 'go, dear mother, and say to him that Gabrielle Dumaine is in distress, and must see him to-night!' Ah, Monsieur, say that you will come!"

"I will come, since Mademoiselle wishes it. But——"

"That is enough," she said; "let us not lose a moment. I was unwilling to leave her even to come to you. The agents of police were with us this afternoon. Ah, it has been terrible!"

I felt the poor lady's hand shake in mine as I led her down the dark stair. At the outer door I gave her my arm; it was now freezing hard, and the pavement was like glass. Neither of us spoke another word; with the thought that was in our minds, what, indeed, could be said?

As we left the house, No. 28 Rue Dauphine, a man who had been standing in the shadow of a passage opposite crossed the street and followed us. I noticed this, and, taking the chance of looking back at the street corners, saw the man always behind us, keeping us in view. He took the opposite side of the Rue is l'Odeon, and was almost abreast of us when we reached Madame Dumaine's door. There he walked very slowly, almost stopping. Evidently the police were taking an intelligent interest in my movements.

Madame Dumaine's shop was No. 8 Rue de l'Odeon; over the door was painted in white letters—"Glove Cleaner." Madame was of a respectable family; her late husband, a merchant in the Faubourg St. Honore, had met with losses; at his death his widow had found herself poor. Obliged to earn a livelihood in some way, she had taken a little shop in the Rue de l'Odeon, with a parlor behind, and had struggled hard to form a connection as glove cleaner. The struggle had not been very successful; Madame Dumaine and her daughter, neat-handed and industrious as they were, had to starve themselves in order to pay the rent. Then Gabrielle went on the stage. She was a singularly beautiful girl, and I believe might have made almost a great actress. Beginning with soubrette parts in one of the Boulevard theatres, she was earning a salary of 35 francs a week when first she met Raoul Girard behind the scenes. Raoul was writing theatrical critics for Le Drame, hence his presence there. I think they fell in love with each other at first sight; I know, at all events, that Raoul did. Gabrielle had many admirers; but she was as good as she was beautiful, and when she accepted Raoul she at once left the stage. I know that Raoul had not asked her to do this, as he said to me himself he had no right to demand such a sacrifice; it was her woman's instinct that led her to make it. They had been betrothed now for nearly two years, and were to be married as soon as Raoul had passed his final examination for the bar, and was making an income that could at all be depended on.

It was a familiar place to me, that little shop in the Rue de l'Odeon, with the rows of gloves in the window and on the counter, and the faint odor of benzine that hung about it. I had spent many merry evenings, along with Raoul, in the little parlor behind. Now all was dark and silent, as if a sorrow worse than death had entered there. I entered the room with extreme reluctance, for I cannot bear, of all things, to see a woman cry, and I expected to find Gabrielle in tears. But I was wrong.

She came forward to meet me without giving me her hand, and looked me straight in the eyes. Her face was pale, but bore no traces of weeping. She carried herself proudly, like a queen; there was a touch al-

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most of defiance in the glance of the dark eyes and the curve of the red lips; never before had Gabrielle seemed to me so superbly beautiful. She reminded me of Rachel; but I saw that there was no acting here.

Her steadfast gaze held me captive; it was first inquiring, then accusing. I had to lower my eyes.

"You, too!" was all she said.

"My child," said Mme. Dumaine, "you are unjust to M. Marsal, as you have been to me!"

"Mother, I shall hate you if you say it! What! believe *that* of my Raoul! Believe that he—no, I shall speak to no one who thinks it! Be false to him if you will, but I shall be true! Desert him if you will, but I shall go to him, and stand at his side when they try him, if they will let me—and tell them he is innocent as I am myself! I know what you think—both of you—though you dare not say it! Shame upon you both—M. Marsal, you are not his friend! Mother, you are not—you are not my mother! Oh, mother, forgive me! My heart is breaking—forgive!" The proud voice passed into a sob, and she threw herself at her mother's feet and buried her face in her lap, weeping.

"She has not wept before," Mme. Dumaine said to me simply. I turned my back upon mother and daughter, with the feeling that to look upon such grief was to profane it. I heard their broken exclamations:

"My child! My own Gabrielle!"

"Oh, mother, you that loved him—called him your son!"

"My child! I will believe what you believe! Yes, he is my son! he is innocent!"

I do not say that my eyes were dry at this moment. I know that I felt myself more of a guilty wretch than the worst criminal that ever stood at the bar of justice. Certainly, Raoul was not guilty, this angel had said so, and therefore it must be true. Let the evidence be what it might, or the police say what they would, Gabrielle had given her verdict; it should be mine. Was woman's love to stand the test and man's friendship to fail?—I cast my doubts to the wind. I swore to atone for my cowardly suspicions.

"Forgive me, M. Marsal," I heard Gabrielle say; "look round, and say you forgive me!"

I looked round and saw her kneeling by her mother's side. One hand was held in Mme. Dumaine's, the other she stretched forth to me. I took it and kissed it, and murmured something about the forgiveness coming from her.

"No, no," she said; "I know that all the appearances are against him—I know that men reason, where women only feel. But there are times when you may trust a woman who reasons with her heart. Believe me, Raoul never did this—cannot have done it!"

"I believe it," I cried; "I swear to you never to doubt again."

"Only think, how could he have done it? On that Monday night he came here; he tapped at the door; I knew it was he—I ran to open. 'Only a word, dear,' he said; 'just to see you and hear your voice, and then good-night, for it is late.' 'Won't you come in, Raoul?' I said to him; 'mother and I are sewing; come in and talk to us for an hour.' 'Not to-night, dearest,' he said; 'I have work to do, and friend Paul is sitting up for me. Good night—don't forget New Year's Day and our walk round the Boulevards!' Then I said good night to him, and—and he kissed me. Oh, mother! M. Marsal! can you think that he went from me—straight from me, with that kiss upon his lips—to murder the old man for his money? Oh God, what evil will people not believe?"

"My darling, we do not believe it! We think as you do—is it not so, M. Marsal?"

I could see that Mme. Dumaine's belief was not so firm as she would have liked it to appear. But for my part, after such advocacy as Gabrielle's, the court of assizes could not have altered my opinion.

"Mademoiselle," I said, "it is true that I suspected Raoul at first. I do not seek to defend myself; I think of it with shame. The evidence is against him just now—strongly against him; that cannot be denied. Well, let us wait meanwhile; he himself will explain it. If his explanation needs proof I will find it; I pledge myself to that, before the Virgin and you!"

"Thanks, my friend," she murmured, again holding out her hand to me.

"Do not grieve, Mademoiselle. Raoul is innocent; therefore he is safe. I shall see him, and tell him what you said to me to-night; that will give him courage."

"And you will help him?"

"While the breath is in my body, and a sou in my purse! I devote myself to this—it is a reparation, an atonement! Mademoiselle, I thank you. You have kept me from utterly betraying my friend."

I sought to comfort the two women, and to some extent succeeded. When I left them Gabrielle was more calm.

"Do you really think——?" faltered Mme. Dumaine, as she opened the shop door for me.

"Madame, I am certain. Your angel of a daughter is right; let us take our inspiration from her."

The poor woman sighed; I noticed the candle shaking in her hand.

"If they find him guilty she will die," she said; "good-night, M. Marsal, and thank you for all your goodness."

I was followed homeward, as I had been in coming. On reaching the Rue Dauphine, I found Pierre in a state of frantic excitement and his wife in tears; she had an affection for Raoul. Everything was known now; Pierre was to give evidence at the inquiry; he had been visited during my absence by an agent of police.

"He is upstairs now," said the servant to me—"he has been waiting for Monsieur more than an hour. Ah, Monsieur, can you believe it? M. Girard, who would not hurt a fly!—surely it is not possible!"

"You are right," I said; "it is not possible." And I went upstairs to face the agent of police.

CHAPTER VII.

Here I interrupt my narrative, to give an account of the remainder of the preliminary inquiry, taken as before from the notes of the judge of instruction. As explained before, I had access to these notes, or rather to a copy of them, at a later stage in the proceedings.

The first evidence taken on the second day of the inquiry was that of the detective officer Py. This officer made the following statement: Having ascertained from the papers of the deceased Joseph Meissner that he was a native of the town of Provins, and possessed house property there, had at once proceeded to that town to make inquiries. Had found that the Jewish family of the Meissners was well known in Provins; that only two members of it now survived, namely, the murdered man, and a nephew of his, named Girard; and that Girard was a student of law in Paris. Struck by the coincidence of the initial letter of this young man's name with the letter on the wrist-stud found beside the body, and also by the fact that the young man, though in Paris, had not communicated with the police on the news of his uncle's death being made public, had decided to follow up this clew. Had found the young man's name and address in the books of the Ecole de Droit; had gone to his place of residence, No. 28 Rue Dauphine, late on the evening of Wednesday, the 26th, and there had surprised Girard, in bed and asleep. Had found at the wrist of his left shirt-sleeve an ivory button with an initial G. on it, now produced; the button at the wrist of the other sleeve was wanting. Had searched the room, which was shared with Girard by another law student, a friend of his, named Marsal. Had brought away the papers belonging to Girard, consisting of notes on legal subjects, drafts of newspaper articles, an unfinished comedy and a few letters. Had arrested Girard on suspicion.

Raoul Girard, arrested on suspicion, was interrogated:

Q. Your name is Raoul Girard?

A. Yes.

Q. Your domicile No. 28 Rue Dauphine?

A. Yes.

Q. Your profession?

A. I am a student of law.

Q. You are a relative of the deceased Joseph Meissner?

A. Yes; he was my uncle.

Q. Can you tell me what was the last occasion on which you saw your uncle, Joseph Meissner?

A. The last occasion on which I saw him alive was almost exactly a year ago; it was about the Christmas of last year.

Q. Why do you say 'the last occasion on which I saw him alive?' (Here Girard showed some emotion, which he seemed to repress with an effort.)

A. Because I saw him again last Monday night, when he was—dead.

Q. You mean to say that on the night of Monday you saw the corpse of Joseph Meissner?

A. Yes; in this room—lying there (pointing to the stain on the floor caused by the blood of the murdered man).

"Yes; in this room—lying there."

Q. At what time was that?

A. About half-past ten; perhaps a few minutes later.

Q. What was your object in visiting your uncle's room at that hour?

A. I was in straits for money, and—(here the accused hesitated).

Q. And you meant to borrow from him?

A. No, I did not mean that. I know that what I am about to say must seem almost incredible, but it is the fact. My uncle owed me money; I came here to ask it back.

Q. How did you gain access to the room?

A. I entered by the window of the cabinet, having climbed up from the court below with the aid of the trellis-work.

Q. Why did you adopt this means of entering your uncle's room?

A. Because he had previously refused me admission, and had ordered the people of the house to expel me if I ever showed myself again.

Q. Well, and what after entering the cabinet?

A. I opened the door, and, looking into the room, saw——

Q. What?

A. (After a moment's hesitation on the part of Girard, who betrayed considerable hesitation) I saw the corpse of my uncle lying in a pool of blood in front of his writing table.

Q. What did you do then?

A. I was horror-stricken, and for some seconds could not move a limb; I felt as if paralyzed. I advanced into the room, which was lit by one candle, then almost expiring. My uncle's body lay all in a heap, as if he had fallen from his chair on being struck from behind. Blood still oozed from his mouth, but he was quite dead; of that I assured myself. A dagger lay beside the corpse, with blood still wet upon it.

Q. Would you recognize the dagger which you say you found lying beside your uncle's corpse, if it were shown you again?

A. Yes, I could identify it with ease.

Q. Is that the dagger? (Here the accused was shown the poniard found beside the body of Meissner, and lately exhibited at the Morgue.)

A. Yes, that is the weapon I saw.

Q. Had you ever seen this weapon before?

A. I had seen, if not this weapon, at all events one so closely resembling it that it would be difficult to distinguish between them. My uncle on one occasion gave me a Japanese dagger which was an exact counterpart of the one I found beside his corpse.

Q. When did he give you this dagger?

A. About two years ago, as nearly as I can remember.

Q. What has become of it now?

A. I sold it shortly after it came into my possession.

Q. The dagger which you say was given you by your uncle had a sheath; can you describe it?

A. The sheath was made of green silk and dark lacquered wood, and in shape resembled a closed fan.

Q. It was, then, like this? (Here the accused was shown a sheath of a dagger taken from the private collection of M. de St. Florent, an exact counterpart of the weapon used in the murder of Meissner).

A. Like that, exactly.

Q. After finding, as you say, the corpse of Meissner lying before the writing table, did you disturb any of the articles in the room?—did you open any of the drawers, or remove anything from the lock-fast places?

A. Assuredly not; after seeing my uncle's body, I had but one impulse—to escape from the room as quickly as possible; that is, as soon as I had recovered from the shock of the dreadful spectacle.

Q. How long do you suppose you were in the room?

A. I should imagine, for several minutes only.

Q. And you left it, how?

A. By the same way that I had entered it—by the window of the cabinet; I clambered down the trellis-work and then hastened from the court.

Q. You see this ivory wrist-stud which has been handed to me by the detective officer Py. Do you recognize it as your property?

A. Yes, I believe it to be my property.

Here the accused Raoul Girard requested permission to make a statement, and did so in the following terms:

"Monsieur the Judge, I shall recount to you in a few words my connection with this dreadful affair. I have to explain that my late uncle, Joseph Meissner, never treated me with kindness. I was brought up at Provins in the house of the brother of Joseph, Simeon Meissner, now dead. He was by trade a clockmaker, and was very poor. I came to Paris five years ago, and very soon had spent all the money left me by my father; both my parents had died while I was yet a child. After my money was gone I had to earn a precarious living by my pen. Meanwhile, my uncle Simeon Meissner fell ill, and was unable to work; I sent him the little money I could scrape together; then he bade me go to his brother Joseph, and ask help from him. Once or twice I received small sums of money from him—very small sums, given grudgingly; more often he would give me some article to sell; it was one of his peculiarities that he could not bring himself to part with money. One morning I found him in a remarkably good humor; a rich foreigner, in temporary difficulties, had gone only a few minutes before I arrived; and foreigners, rich and in temporary difficulties, were, he said, the sort of clients he preferred. That day he gave me a dagger of Eastern manufacture, saying that I might dispose of it, as he did not want to keep such a thing about him. I had the dagger in my possession for several weeks before I succeeded in selling it, which I did at last to a dealer in curiosities in the Palais Royal, for a hundred and twenty francs. Next time I visited my uncle he asked me how much I had got for the dagger. I told him, and he was very angry at the thought of having parted with a thing of that value. After this I found it impossible to extract from him either money or money's worth. All that I ever received from him went to my uncle Simeon—I kept not a centime to myself; rather than have done so I would have starved. When Simeon Meissner died I was at the very bottom of my purse. I wished to go to Provins to bury him. I asked my uncle Joseph for assistance. He refused to give me anything at the moment, but bade me go to Provins to see to the funeral, promising to refund me whatever I might expend. I borrowed money wherever I could, and went; on my return Joseph Meissner refused to give a single sou, and when I reminded him of his promise denied that he had ever made it. He insulted me most cruelly, declaring that I had been living in idleness on his hard-earned gains, and draining him of his money under false pretences. I naturally retorted; he flew into a passion, or feigned to do so, and bade me never cross his threshold again. As I went down stairs he screamed insults after me, calling me 'beggar,' 'good-for-nothing' and other names of that kind; finally he shouted for the janitor, and told the man on no account to admit me if I should ever present myself there again. I assured him that the order was needless, and, at the time, meant what I said. After this I managed to support myself in a way by writing for the journals, as I had done before; but about six weeks ago Le Petit Monde stopped, and with it the greater part of my scanty income. I had never been reduced to such distress before. I was in debt; there was absolutely nothing left me that I could pawn. Under ordinary circumstances I would not have gone to Joseph Meissner after what had passed, even to demand my rights. But I had a special need for money at this very time when my income had failed me. I thought it hard that this rich man should refuse payment of his debt to the penniless student of the Latin Quarter! I determined to go to him; to make a last attempt; to press my claim. I invite the attention of Monsieur the Judge to this fact—that the resolve was sudden; that it came to me in a moment of excitement. In a normal state of mind I would not have done as I did; but everything had gone against me, everything had failed me; it was my poverty that goaded me on. I did not reason; I acted wholly on impulse. On Monday night I came to this house, and hurried through the passage into the court. I knew that I could reach the window of the cabinet by clambering up the trellis-work which surrounds the court, and so gain access to this room. This I managed to do, though not without considerable exertion; in making the ascent I tore the sleeve of my coat, and must have loosened the stud at my wrist so that it afterward dropped on the floor. I swung myself into the cabinet, paused an instant to recover my breath, and then, on opening the door, saw what I have already described. . . . Monsieur the Judge will easily figure to himself my consternation, my horror, especially when I perceived, lying beside the corpse and dyed in blood, a dagger exactly like the one formerly given me by the murdered man. My brain reeled, my body trembled; for some time I was incapable

[To Be Continued.]

Board of Supervisors.

A special meeting of the board of supervisors has been called by supervisors H. R. Jones, W. H. Lewis and W. H. Mills, December 31st, for the purpose of "finishing up old business." At their last meeting in the absence of Capt. Worrell they finished up some old business in good shape and paid Mrs. Blake $6,500 for a road through her place when public sentiment was decidedly against any such action and the board knew it. What old business have they to attend to now?

A Public Building for Vicksburg.

On Tuesday last Senator J. Z. George introduced a bill asking for the appropriation of $100,000 for a public building in Vicksburg. No other city in America is more in need of such a building. Our government offices are scattered over town, promiscuously, from the woodyards on the river bank to the garrett of our tallest houses, no two being in the same locality or conveniently near each other. Senator George knows our wants, and has thanks for making them known.

A Prominent Citizen of Chicago, Killed on a Railroad.

CHICAGO, Dec. 12.—Mr. Henry Hoyt, of the firm of Hoyt Bros., and a well known citizen of Chicago, was instantly killed at Woodtown Park last evening. He had stepped from the Illinois Central suburban train, and had his back turned toward another train, when the Ohio express, which does not stop at Woodtown, whirled through the suburbs at a high rate of speed. The engine struck him in the back. He was picked up fully ten feet from where he stood when the engine struck him. Both legs had been smashed, his head was bruised and his spine broken. He died almost instantly. Mr. Hoyt was born in Tully, New York, in 1848, and leaves a wife but no children.

Louisiana State Grange.

The Louisiana State Grange P. of H. met at the hall of Kyche Grange No. 130 near Garners mill, Winn parish, December 8th. After a well attended and harmonious session of three days, and adjourned to meet at St. Maurice, Winn Parish, La., on the third Tuesday in December, 1886. The following officers were re-elected. David Morgan, Master, Magnolia East Baton Rouge Parish; H. W. L. Lewis, Secretary, Osyka, Miss.